Springfield Township High School

**Graduation Project Annotated Bibliography**

**Student Name:**

**Annotation # 9**

**MLA Citation:**

O'Toole, Randal. "SEPTA out of loop on transit needss." *The Philadelphia Inquirer* 16 Apr. 2006, sec. C: C01. Print.

**INFORMATION:**

Scope and purpose of the work:

This article is an informational overview of SEPTA transportation systems. The article gives information on current happenings of SEPTA transportation. The article is also a persuasive piece as it argues against current SEPTA policy and how it is flawed. The article argues that SEPTA has maintained a 19th century transit system that does not support suburban use of public transportation.

Intended Audience:

The intended audience of this article is lay people. The article is for people who are familiar with SEPTA and have an understanding of how it operates. The average transit rider can probably understand most of the topics discussed in this article. This article can also be easily understood by people who have an idea of logical transportation and the shortfalls of SEPTA.

**SUMMARY**

Thesis or main idea:

“While Philadelphia’s transit system does a good job serving downtown workers, it does a poor job of helping people reach suburban employment.”

Summary of main arguments:

* SEPTA is still focused on a transit system that focuses on getting people in and out of downtown Philadelphia
  + No focus on the suburbs
* SEPTA’s plans to go green/improve systems are flawed

**EVIDENCE**

Summary of evidence:

* Jobs in downtown Philadelphia have fallen while jobs in the suburbs have risen
  + People commuting to these suburban jobs are opting to drive
  + “While Philadelphia’s transit system does a good job serving downtown workers, it does a poor job of helping people reach suburban employment.” (O’Toole)
  + “SEPTA clings to a 19th-century transit model focused on just one job center, downtown Philadelphia” (O’Toole)
* SEPTA’s plan makes sense when the jobs are all in one place
  + But as suburban expansion has taken place this system falls apart
* Buses are the easiest way to fix the problem
  + Rail takes too long to build and is not cost-effective
  + However, SEPTA funding is focused on rail/subway
* SEPTA gets funding by claiming mass transit reduces pollution
  + “But you cannot reduce air pollution if people will not ride your trains.” (O’Toole)
  + Mass transit isn’t the best way to reduce air pollution
    - Costs way too much to invest in new rail lines
    - Whereas you could make “investments in traffic-signal coordination [which] can reduce air pollution at a cost of less than $10,000 per ton.” (O’Toole)
    - Doing this would also relieve congestion
* SEPTA’s funding
  + Does not come from transit riders
  + “fares paid by transit riders covered less than 40 percent of SEPTA’s operating costs and none of its capital costs.” (O’Toole)
  + SEPTA is more focused on special interest groups and unions, which is where most of the money comes from
* Transit Riders
  + Two Groups

1. “people who cannot drive and who depend on transit to get around” (O’Toole)
2. “people who can drive but who find transit preferable or more convenient for some of their trips” (O’Toole)
   1. “mainly downtown workers, because most people who can drive and who have jobs outside of Philadelphia will not put up with the inconvenient routings and long delays required to take transit to suburban jobs.” (O’Toole)

* Emphasis on rail transit
  + Not good for suburban people
  + Where lines don’t exist people can’t travel
* Ways to improve
  + “contract out most or all of its bus operations to private operators” (O’Toole)
  + “legalize private jitney buses” (O’Toole)
    - Private taxis to get people to stations or places

**EVALUATION**

Evaluation of research:

This article is well researched, which can be seen through the various examples and statistics that support O’Toole’s claims. O’Toole utilizes a lot of logical arguments that make his points stronger and clearer. The article’s use of logically place arguments makes O’Toole’s criticisms of SEPTA that much stronger. O’Toole’s proposal’s of solutions are also clearly well researched and provide logical solutions to the problems of SEPTA.

 Evaluation of scope:

O’Toole does a good job at covering several topics surrounding SEPTA. While he focuses on rail and bus systems, he does not cover all mass transit topics such as ticketing systems. However, the general overview is really interesting because it gives thoughtful analysis into why SEPTA’s mass transit systems are failing to address the needs of Philadelphian citizens.

Evaluation of author bias:

O’Toole is biased against SEPTA and spends a majority of the article arguing against their plans and ideas. He is critical of their transportation mindset that he feels does not adequately address the needs of workers whose place of employment is in the suburbs.

**REFLECTION:**

This sources provides a great look at the way SEPTA is run and how i